

**CLEAN  
COVER  
CONTAIN**

# H1N1 (Swine Flu) and Children with Special Health Care Needs

Novel H1N1 flu is a new and very different influenza virus that is spreading worldwide among people. Influenza is unpredictable, but scientists believe that the new H1N1 virus will cause illness, hospital stays and deaths in the United States over the coming months.

Symptoms of seasonal flu and novel H1N1 flu include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people also may have vomiting and diarrhea. Young children are less likely to have typical influenza symptoms (e.g., fever and cough) and infants may present to medical care staff with fever and lethargy, and may not have cough or other respiratory symptoms or signs.

If you suspect your child has influenza, call your doctor. Antiviral medication, if taken soon after infection, can shorten the illness.

- Aspirin or aspirin-containing products (e.g. bismuth subsalicylate - Pepto Bismol) **SHOULD NOT** be given to any child with a confirmed or suspected case of H1N1 due to the risk of Reye's syndrome.

For relief of fever, other anti-fever medications such as acetaminophen or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs are recommended.

- Children younger than 4 years of age should not be given over-the-counter cold medications without first speaking with a healthcare provider.



[www.statehealth.in.gov](http://www.statehealth.in.gov)

## Children with Developmental Disabilities and Chronic Medical Conditions

Children at higher risk for complications from influenza infection include:

- infants less than 6 months
- All children with:**
  - immune suppression
  - chronic kidney disease
  - heart disease
  - HIV/AIDS
  - diabetes
  - asthma or other problems of the lungs
  - sickle cell disease
  - long-term aspirin therapy for chronic disorders
  - intellectual and developmental disability
  - cerebral palsy
  - spinal cord injuries
  - seizure disorders
  - metabolic conditions or other neuromuscular disorders

During this flu season families are encouraged to remember the importance of maintaining your child's health by making sure their other vaccines are up to date. If your child requires medication (e.g., asthma, HIV/AIDS), make sure he/she continues taking the medications.



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## General Health Prevention

Take everyday steps to prevent the spread of all flu viruses. These include:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. If soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Teach your child to take these actions too.
- Keep child from having close contact (about 6 feet) with sick people, including family.
- Keep surfaces (bedside tables, bathroom, kitchen counters and toys) clean by wiping them down with a household disinfectant according to directions on the product label.

## School and Daycare

Recommendations for schools and daycares have been changing and may continue to change. Stay connected with local officials and your child's medical team over the flu season. Currently schools are following these procedures:

- **Encourage students and staff to stay home when sick:**  
Those with flu-like illness should stay home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever, or signs of a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicines. They should stay home even if they are using antiviral drugs.
- **Separate ill students and staff:**  
Students and staff who appear to have flu-like illness should be sent to a room separate from others until they can be sent home.
  - Families of children with special health care needs who receive routine medication within the school day are encouraged to learn where students will be isolated at their school. Well children should receive medication in an alternative setting to avoid being exposed.
- **Encourage hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette:**  
The basic foundations of influenza prevention: stay home when sick, wash hands frequently with soap and water when possible, and cover noses and mouths with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or a shirt sleeve or elbow if no tissue is available).

## Vaccination

A vaccine is expected to be available by Fall 2009 to prevent infection with the novel influenza A (H1N1) virus. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that all children with high-risk medical conditions or disabilities should be vaccinated against H1N1 influenza. In addition, existing recommendations about who should receive the seasonal influenza vaccine should be followed:

- all children ages 6 months through 18 years, including those who are healthy and those with conditions that increase the risk of complications from influenza
- household contacts and out-of-home care providers of:
  - children with high-risk conditions and
  - healthy children younger than 5 years of age

## For More Information

- There is an announcement in sign language at: **Swine Flu (Influenza A H1N1): Public Service Announcement**
- For information about the H1N1 (swine flu) go to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) at [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu)
- If you need help finding a doctor for your infant or child, call the **Indiana Family Helpline** at 1-800-433-0746 for assistance.



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